

## The Polk Case: Why Look Back?

*'Above all, should the United States government extend the same constitutional and moral rights to reporters as it does to ordinary citizens?'*

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*Did he go too far in pursuit of the story of corruption in Greece, Washington's newest ally and the recipient of massive Truman Doctrine aid?*

*Was he reckless or right to risk his life to get the subject of an upcoming exposé (the Greek Foreign Minister) to react immediately to highly damaging information?*

*Should Polk have waited until the material had aired and he was out of harm's way?*

One reason few wanted to pursue the truth of this case is that George Polk was somehow a tainted figure in those early McCarthyist days. For Polk had persisted in pounding away at his government's policy at a time when dissent was often deemed synonymous with treason.

Thus another still pertinent question raised by *The Polk Conspiracy* is should a reporter's patriotism, rather than the quality of his reporting, be permitted to become an issue? Above all, should the United States government extend the same constitutional and moral rights to reporters as it does to ordinary citizens? The answers to these questions may seem self-evident. The George Polk Case proves they are not, certainly not in a crisis.

George Polk was the sort of reporter who, in the words of a colleague, "would jump into the deep blue sea" if the story required it. 1948, the year he claimed his country's attention for a brief period before he was murdered, was not a propitious time for his particular brand of journalism. Washington, bitterly disap-

pointed that the alliance forged with Moscow in the heat of war was stillborn, saw the world entirely through the prism of the Cold War. Royalist, reactionary Greece was President Truman's ally, by sole virtue of Athens' rabid anti-communism.

George Polk, CBS' Athens correspondent, did not think that was qualification enough for nearly unlimited dollars and friendship. In early May, 1948 Polk finally got the payoff for months of relentless reporting: a tip from a Chase Manhattan Bank employee in New York stating that the head of the Royalist party, Constantine Tsaldaris (then Foreign Minister and formerly Prime Minister) had deposited a large sum of money in a private account in New York City. The charge had potentially far reaching consequences for a government which had recently gone hat-in-hand to Washington (promising austerity and reforms) to plead for further aid.

George Polk, a reporter who believed passionately that every story has two sides, decided to confront the Foreign Minister with the charge. Less than a week later Polk was dead, found floating in Salonika Bay, his wrists and ankles bound, the back of his head blown away by a single bullet.

It is at this point that the story reveals its most repellent aspect. A remarkable number of George Polk's colleagues, as well as some of the most eminent members of the Washington-New York political establishment, turned a 'blind eye to a screaming injustice underway in Greece. Worse, some of them participated actively in a cover-up. For the tracks to Polk's killers led not to the Communists, but to the expensive ally



Kati Marton, a former foreign correspondent, wrote *The Polk Conspiracy* just published by Farrar, Starus and Giroux. —Photo ©1990 Firooz Zahedi

itself. The Polk Case put at risk the fragile alliance cobbled together to bring Greece "back from the brink" of Communist expansion.

The murder of Polk was soon compounded by another crime. Using the most barbaric police state tactics, Washington's friends in Athens forced a confession of complicity in Polk's murder from a Greek reporter. They staged a show trial no less grotesque than those held East of the great divide around the same time.

Polk's government did not dispute Athens' view that one man's fate ought not to upset a new geopolitical order. Polk's colleagues, struck mute by the prevailing climate, betrayed their friend. Thus, more than a man was the casualty of this sordid chapter. Truth, as usual, was its first victim.

Could the Polk Conspiracy happen today? The question is well worth pondering.

Overseas Press Club of America, Inc.  
310 Madison Avenue, Suite 2116  
New York, New York 10017 USA

## OPC Calendar

Events at 3 W. 51st St. unless noted.  
Event reservations 212-983-4655  
Lodging and meal reservations 212-582-5454

### Rooney Keynotes Jan. 15 Lunch

**Tuesday, Jan. 15, Noon. OPC 1991 Keynote Lunch with Andy Rooney.** Tart tongued commentator for CBS' 60 Minutes will offer his perspective of world affairs. Reservations: Mary Novick, club manager, at 212-983-4655, or by mail to Overseas Press Club, Suite 2116, 310 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017. With mail reservations please include checks covering the \$35 per person cost.

**Thursday, Jan. 17, 5:30 p.m. Ireland Night.** Guests will include Ireland's consul general, **Daidhi O'Ceallaigh**, and top Aer Lingus and Bord Failte (Irish Tourist Board) executives. Free for members and guests. Reservations (212) 983-4655.

**Tuesday, Jan. 22, 5:30 p.m. Board of Governors**

**Thursday, Jan. 24. All-Club Mixer. Meet those who share 3 W. 51st St.**—Squadron A, The Lambs, OPC, and the Virginia Club. Music, dancing, buffet dinner, sing-a-long. Open bar. \$35. Information: 212-582-5454.

**Monday, Feb. 11,** "Nick and Nora" Theatre Party at St. James Theater. 5:30 p.m. Dinner, 8:00 p.m. curtain. Information: 212-582-5454.

**Tuesday, April 23. Annual Awards Dinner,** Grand Hyatt.

**Monday, June 3 through Tuesday, June 11, OPC Ireland Trip.** Reservations Len Saffir 212-362-7099 or Ralph Gardner 212-877-6820.

### Jan. 17 Irish Night Heralds Spring Trip

**By RALPH GARDNER**  
Whether or not you have signed up for the Overseas Press Club's VIP Ireland Adventure next June, mark your calendar now to attend Irish Night, 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 17. Guests will include Ireland's Consul General, Daidhi O'Ceallaigh and top Aer Lingus and Bord Failte (Irish Tourist Board) executives. The film *Dublin 1991: Europe's Cultural Capital* will be shown.

If your passport needs to be renewed, do it now. If you have not already done so, send in your deposit of \$300 per person today. Deposits are due now and are refundable until January 31, with a \$50 cancellation charge.

The total cost is \$1875. The same accommodations, transportation, theater, etc. booked by an individual would cost \$3250 (and that would not include any of the receptions, entertainment and extras OPC travelers will enjoy.)

Single room occupancy is available at \$450 extra.

Because OPC must pay early deposits to assure special low rates, the balance (\$1575 after payment of deposit) must be received by Feb. 15.

We depart from JFK on Aer Lingus for Dublin, Monday, June 3 and return from Shannon on Tuesday, June 11. The group will stay at the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin and at Adare Manor, a castle in County Limerick on Ireland's west coast.

Events include sight-seeing, Abbey Theatre, Irish cabaret, a traditional Irish banquet, ample free time for shopping,

strolling, visiting pubs, etc. There will be a full Irish breakfast every day.

Space is limited to 40 members and their guests so send your deposit today.

Make checks to Overseas Press Club (Ireland Trip). Mail to Mary Novick, Overseas Press Club, 310 Madison Ave., Suite 2118, New York, N.Y. 10017.

For more information call past president Len Saffir, the trip coordinator at (212) 362-7099 or Ralph Gardner at (212) 877-6820.

### New Members

#### ACTIVE RESIDENT

Janice Castro, associate editor, *Time*, New York.  
Ester R. Dyer, editor-in-chief, *usAsia International*, New York.  
Richard A. Phalon Sr., contributing editor, *Forbes*, New York.  
John D. Williams, contract writer, Business Tokyo, Wall *Street Journal*, New York.  
Active overseas  
Gitobu Imanyara, editor-in-chief, *Nairobi Law Monthly*.

#### AFFILIATE

John T. Gould, director of corporate affairs, Unilever, New York.

#### ASSOCIATE

Anthony C. J. Sharp, Maid Systems, New York.

#### REINSTATEMENTS

William O'Shea  
Jack Raymond  
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Fred Vaz Dias  
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Harry Minetree  
Kenneth Davis

# OPC Bulletin

Overseas Press Club of America  
3 W. 51st St., New York, N.Y.  
January 1991

## The Polk Case: Why Look Back?

By KATI MARTON

*The Polk Conspiracy*, my reconstruction of the murder 42 years ago of one of journalism's most distinguished practitioners, is not merely a historic journey.

The year 1990 bore witness to the violent deaths of 43 journalists, making Polk's story as relevant today as it was in 1948, the year the CBS correspondent

was murdered in Salonika, Greece. The profession, particularly foreign corresponding, has not become any safer than it was then. The questions raised by the Polk Case are as urgent today as they were in those chilly days of the nascent Cold War. They are questions which strike at the heart of the profession.

Even with much of the veil of mystery lifted now from the case, George Polk's tale will continue to haunt journalists.

He was a brave reporter who fervently believed in the highest standards of the craft and was rewarded for his contribution with a bullet and the indifference of many of his own colleagues.

His crime, if crime there was, was being out of step with the climate of his paranoid age.

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Soviet panel, from left, Harvard Prof. Marshall Goldman, former *Izvestia* columnist Melor Sturua, former Moscow correspondent Nicholas Daniloff, and *Business Week's* Peter Galuszka. Story, p. 4. —Photo Fred Ferguson

## 43 Died In 1990 While Reporting

Forty-three journalists were murdered in line of service last year, according to the new Freedom House survey.

The report's author, Leonard R. Sussman, said, "Two global press-freedom trends crossed in 1990: First, physical attacks on journalists, a record high the previous year, decreased in 1990 but remained significantly oppressive."

"Second, the press systems in recently liberated Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union diversified their news reporting, but did not yet create nonideological media supported by market competition," he said.

Spectacular change came in the Soviet Union where writers are freer to criticize even the top leadership, but media facilities are still controlled by the party and the government.

In Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland censorship has been eliminated but, said the report, "fact-based" journalism has not replaced propaganda.

Freedom House said 61 countries have free print and broadcast media, representing 39 percent of the 157 countries examined. Newly free media are in Bolivia, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Panama, Poland and Thailand.

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# Who's doing what, when,

By AL KAFF and RALPH GARDNER

## Jerry Gray Assistant To Foreign Editor At AP

Jerry Gray, 40, AP New Jersey bureau chief, has been named to the newly created post of assistant to the foreign editor. He is a native of Greenwood, Miss., joined the AP in Memphis, Tenn., in 1975 and moved to the World Services desk in New York in 1983.

## Larry Foster Retires From Johnson & Johnson

Larry Foster retired as Corporate Vice President of Public Relations at Johnson & Johnson and opened his own PR consulting firm in Westfield, NJ.

He had been with Johnson and Johnson 33 years and helped form its first public relations department.

He was recently elected president of the Arthur S. Page Society, an organization of senior public relations and corporate communications executives

## Rohama Lee Recognized For 62 Years In Film

Rohama Lee's 62 years in the film industry were recognized at the 50th Anniversary Dinner of the Canadian Picture Pioneers. Lee, 85, began her career as a secretary at Columbia Pictures. She moved to public relations for Columbia in New York and London, where she wrote about films for the *Toronto Star* and *Everybody's Weekly*. She returned to the U.S. with the Royal Visit of George VI and Queen Mary.

During World War II she worked at the Office of War Information headed

by Frank Capra in New York, where she wrote documentaries. Later she "translated" radio into TV for an advertising agency. She is working on a project at Syracuse University to index Film News from its beginning in 1939 and as reviews editor of *Sightlines*, a publication of the American Film/Video Association.

## Fay Gillis Wells Upset Over Article On Earhart

Fay Gillis Wells, a friend of Amelia Earhart's and founding OPC member, reported "disgust and anger" in Atchison, Kansas, the aviatrix's birthplace, over an article published in the Nov. 13 issue of *Sun*, a supermarket tabloid, claiming that Earhart is alive at 92, living on a rubber plantation in Indonesia. Earhart vanished over the Pacific in 1936 while attempting a round-the-world flight with her navigator, Fred Noonan.

## Peter Job to Replace Glen Renfrew at Reuters

Peter Job, 49, now managing director of Reuters' operations in Asia, will become managing director and chief executive officer of Reuters on March 1 when Glen Renfrew, 62, retires. Job served in Reuters editorial posts in India, Malaysia, Indonesia, the United Kingdom and Latin America before moving into management. He has headed operations in Asia since 1983.

## Ken Gilmore Retires From Reader's Digest

Kenneth O. Gilmore retired as editor in chief of *Reader's Digest* on Dec. 31. Gilmore, a 33-year veteran of *Reader's*

*Digest*, served as the magazine's editor in chief since 1984. He is leaving for health reasons.

His successor, Kenneth Y. Tomlinson is former vice president and deputy editor in chief. Tomlinson served as deputy editor in chief since July 1990. He joined the magazine in 1968 in Washington, later serving as associate editor, senior editor and foreign correspondent in Paris

## Gil Baker Service Jan. 13

A memorial service for Gil Baker will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 13, in Christ Chapel of Riverside Church, 120th Street and Riverside Drive.

## Henry Hartzenbusch Moves To Washington

Henry Hartzenbusch, a member of the Overseas Committee, has returned from Germany, where he was deputy director of VOA/Europe, to Washington to head a new VOA service for United Germany and other German-speaking areas of Europe. Wife Nancy has resumed her work escorting Spanish-speaking visitors brought here by the USIS.

### OPCBulletin

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# here, there, everywhere

Share your assignments, projects, travels, books, awards, personal activities. Include a photo. Overseas members: Al Kaff, Cornell University News Service, 840 Hanshaw Road, Ithaca, NY 14850-1548, USA. Domestic members: Ralph Gardner, OPC Bulletin, Suite 2116, 310 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

## Bulletin Plans To List Freelance Opportunities For Overseas Members

Henry Gellermann returned from Europe and told the OPC Board that some of our members are looking for work because news bureaus have been closed or sized down. Members who are available for free-lance assignments may submit to the *OPC Bulletin* a brief item on their areas of expertise along with their address to inform readers who make assignments of their availability.

Meanwhile, with thanks to the *International Herald Tribune*, we reprint this ad as a service to members overseas seeking assignments:

### TOP MAGAZINE WRITERS

The world's most successful magazine is looking for a few highly professional freelance journalists based in Europe.

*READER'S DIGEST*, published monthly in 15 languages, seeks experienced, versatile writers to create articles for its 100 million readers throughout the world. If you can write lively, carefully constructed pieces that inform, entertain and are meticulously accurate, we offer you generous rates and an excellent opportunity to establish an international reputation. Resourceful journalists able to work to our exacting standards will find us a reliable and rewarding market.

Demonstrate your writing skills by sending your resume and samples of your work to *Reader's Digest*, 54 rue de Varenne, 75007 Paris.

## Here's How To Reach The Overseas Press Club

OPC's mailing address for dues, membership information, medical insurance, and other club matters is 310 Madison Ave., Suite 2116, New York, N.Y. 10017, telephone 212-983-4655.

Payments for charges at 3 W. 51st St. billed by the Women's National Republican Club should be sent to WNRC at that address, which is on the statement. The WNRC telephone is 212-582-5454.

Suggestions or complaints regarding service at 3 W. 51st St. may be sent to Ms. Fran Carpenter, chair, house committee, OPC, 310 Madison Ave., Suite 2116, New York, N.Y. 10017.

## Five Win Cabot Awards For Work in Latin America

Five journalists specializing in Latin American or Caribbean affairs were presented with the Maria Moors Cabot prize by Columbia University.

This years recipients were Richard Boudreaux, bureau chief in Managua, Nicaragua, of the Los Angeles *Times*; Marc Garcia and Elsie Etheart, editors and publishers of the weekly newspaper *Haiti en Marche* in Miami, and hosts of radio programs there; Alma Guillermoprieto of Mexico City, who writes for the *New Yorker*, and Huáscar Cajías Kauffmann, founder of the daily newspaper *Presencia* in La Paz, Bolivia.

The Cabot prizes, gold medals and honorariums of \$1,000 are awarded by the trustees of Columbia University.

## National Press Club Reopens To OPCers

After a break of several years, OPC members can enjoy reciprocal privileges at the National Press Club in Washington. Each club will admit members in good standing to use dining facilities, research, library and meeting rooms. Visiting OPC members should show their membership cards to obtain a guest card which covers privileges for 30 days. Charges must be paid in cash or with major credit cards.

The National Press Club is on the 13th floor of the National Press Building, which the club owns, at 14th and F Streets NW; telephone 202-662-7520.

The NPC has expanded its library for the use of members and guests. It was the recipient of a \$1 million gift from Eric Friedheim, a NPC member since 1934, which encouraged the club to expand services for working journalists.

## New York Visitors

When non-resident OPC members visiting Manhattan wish to use the facilities at 3 W. 51st St, they may simply show their regular membership card. Charges for food or lodging must be settled with a major personal credit card.

The procedure eliminates the previous requirement to obtain a guest card. Guest cards are available, however, for non-members, upon application of any member (resident or non-resident). Call Mary Novick at 212-983-4655 when you have a friend, colleague or family member for whom privileges are desired.

# Panel Sees Unavoidable Period Of Chaos In USSR

By FRED T. FERGUSON

If there is one thing he has learned about the U.S.S.R., said Nicholas Daniloff, ex-UPI and *U.S. News* correspondent in Moscow, it is that it is a place of paradoxes.

"Always there is the exception to the rule," he told the full house audience at the Dec. 5 panel discussion on the Soviet Union. Recalling how he was jailed as a spy, held amid worldwide outcry and finally kicked out of the country, he said, "A few days ago I received a call from the Soviet Embassy in Washington. The man said, 'Mr. Daniloff, you have always been a good observer of the Soviet reality and we want to invite you to go back to Moscow.' You can imagine my surprise. But now I'm going back."

The panel, with *Business Week's* Peter Galuszka as moderator, agreed the immediate outlook is grim. All predicted a period of chaos, but only Daniloff would hazard a guess at its length — three years. While there might be a radical change in government as a result of upheaval, it may likely be more of a change engineered by president Mikhail S. Gorbachev than by a radical faction.

"Our marshals are gutless old people who've spent all their lives serving the party," said former *Izvestia* columnist Melor Sturua. "There will be a coup only if Gorbachev says, 'Go!' And it would reinstate Gorbachev as military dictator, if it were to happen, I believe."

He emphasized that while there are shortages, "Nobody is dying. There is no starvation. Some of our women need Jane Fonda's diet, I think."

The panel was unanimous on one thing: that while American's tend to be fond of Raisa Gorbachev, the Russian

people don't like her, she is too well-dressed, open with her opinions and forward for Russians, who tend to be traditionalists and resent a woman who on occasion tells them how to behave.

Harvard Professor Marshall T. Goldman recalled a state dinner in Washington and noting the close bond between the Gorbachevs when the couple entered holding hands. "Bush only did that when he was accused of having a mistress," Goldman quipped.

## Freedom House

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Another 31 countries (20 percent) have partly free media, and 65 nations (42 percent) have mass communications which are not free. This is the ninth annual assessment conducted by Sussman, the organization's specialist in international communications.

Farzad Bazoft, the British correspondent hung by President Saddam Hussein's government in March, was one of 43 journalists killed during the year. Bazoft was executed for investigating an explosion at an Iraqi military base. Twelve journalists were killed, said Sussman, for publicizing information about political activities that the murderers wanted kept secret. Three were killed by a drug cartel, another three by religious fanatics, and two died covering the fighting in Lebanon. Motives of other killers were not known.

Freedom House, now entering its 50th year, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes human rights and democratic principles around the world.

## OPC QUOTE: John Leonard on Waugh's Scoop

**Scoop will be broadcast 9-11 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 30, on Channel 13.**

William Boyd, who's written some African comedies himself, adapted Waugh for television, and Gavin Millar directed what's left of the novel with mordant wit, and it's, ah, bootless to complain about omitted bits just because I wanted all of them in....

I've toured this territory often enough on the tricycle of my career to realize that newspapers really do behave like governments, and so, in imitation, do TV networks, and what we get, instead of truth, is more like the "virtual reality" of science-fiction cyberspace, a kind of computer simulation. Even as we speak, foreign correspondents are gathering in their wolf packs, in hotel lobbies in hot spots the weary world over, prepared to file whatever their editors insist on hearing, from Baghdad or Riiyadh, wearing native bangles.

"Everyone," wrote Waugh, "now emulated the costume of the Frenchmen: sombreros, dungarees, jodhpurs, sunproof shirts and bullet-proof waistcoats, holsters, bandoliers, Newmarket boots, cutlasses.... The men of Excelsior Movie-Sound News sporting the horsehair capes and silk shirts of native chieftains, made camp in the Liberty garden and photographed themselves at great length in attitudes of vigilance and repose."

This was 1937!

—John Leonard in *New York Magazine*